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Women's Co-operative Guild

Winter circular, August 1898

Kirkby Lonsdale

[1898]

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The Guild,

List of Pamphlets

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Women's Co-operative Guild.

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Winter Circular,

August, 1898.

To be obtained from the General Secretary,
Miss Llewelyn Davies, Kirkby Lonsdale.

Women's Co-operative Guild.

No. of Branches 240. No. of Members 12,100.

WINTER CIRCULAR.

Kirkby Lonsdale,
August, 1898.

To Our Members:—

The time has now come round for planning out our year's work. Once again we have a clean page before us, and no doubt the questions occupying every Branch Committee are—what shall we write on it? how can we improve the old ways, and into what new ones shall we venture?

We hope our Winter Circular and List of Lectures will enable every Branch to find a satisfactory answer to these questions, and that attractive printed programmes will be forthcoming. We have tried to provide for new and old, rich and poor, and it now remains for Branches to make their choice. First come will be first served, and on this occasion we should like all to speak at once.

Joint work between Men & Women.

First of all, after reading the Circular and Lecture List, you should arrange for a deputation from your Branch Committee to go, Circular in hand, to consult with your Educational Committee. Tell them of the success that our joint lectures on the Public Health Laws met with last year in Societies, and urge again that work between men and women should again be undertaken jointly this year.

Apart from other kinds which may suggest themselves to you, we would strongly advise the following :—

(1) Co-operative Classes.

It is not too much to say that there should be no Society without a class in Co-operative Principles and History wherever a Guild Branch or Educational Committee exists. We must, of course, have good teachers. It is unreasonable to expect people to attend Classes (or Lectures either) if the teaching is prosy and dull. The number of teachers in the movement is small—but we hope those whose names we give below will make their classes interesting.

Co-operative teaching should be free as air to students, and the teachers should be *well paid* by the Societies employing them.* The Examination of students is undertaken by the Co-operative Union. Last year, one of our members (Miss Underwood

* The Educational Committee of the Co-operative Union make a grant to the Society of 5/- for each student passing the Examination, and in addition gives a prize (in books) of 2/6 to each student gaining an 'Excellent' certificate. The six best students have in the *Advanced Stages* also the opportunity of gaining scholarships or prizes of £2 10s. to attend the University Extension Summer Meetings. The Examination is usually held in March.

of Plumstead), came out 2nd in the first class, and two others (Miss Eccleston of Nelson, and Miss Pearce of Plumstead) both obtained first classes. This should greatly encourage our members.

Among others, the following teachers are willing to take classes :—

NAME.	PLACE.
Mr. W. H. Berry, (Woolwich.)	London and neighbourhood.
Miss McTaggart, (London School of Economics) ..	West London Society, (open to members from neighbouring Branches.)
Mr. W. Henry Brown, (Stratford)....	London and neighbourhood
Mr. A. Mansbridge	London and neighbourhood.
Mr. J. P. Logan	" "
Mr. J. Bustin	" "
Miss Spooner, (S. Sectional Secretary)	London.
Mr. W. H. Steel, (Ulverston).....	Ulverston and neighbouring Societies.
Mr. T. R. Anfield, (Hull)	Kingston-upon-Hull Society.
Miss Bompas, (Leeds).....	Leeds (Central) Society.
Mr. J. S. Appleby	Leeds and neighbourhood.
Mrs. Bernheim, (Bradford).....	Neighbourhood of Bradford (after Christmas.)
Mrs. Watkins, (Plymouth)	Plymouth.
Mr. R. Halstead, (Hebden Bridge)....	Calderdale District. (Subject Industrial History.)

Some Societies may be able to supply themselves wi their own teachers. If not, application should be made at on to the General Secretary.

(2) Lectures on the Housing of the People.

We have decided to give the subject of "Housing

our special attention this year. It is one that should appeal to every man and woman, particularly every *co-operative* man and woman. All would like a sanitary, convenient and comfortable house to live in; and the inadequate supply of such houses forms one of our social evils. But it is an evil which we as Co-operators can do much towards removing by a wise and energetic use of our powers. Indeed we have already become house-builders on a considerable scale, and one of our objects in taking up this subject, is to induce our Societies to greatly extend this side of their work.

There are many and varied aspects of the Housing Question, which will be dealt with in the Lectures we have been able to arrange, see pages 1, 2, 3 on List of Lectures). Among the Lecturers you will find Miss Ravenhill, who is now so well known and appreciated as to need no recommendation. We have besides been most fortunate in getting the help of Dr. Bowmaker (author of the "Housing of the Working Classes") who has a mastery of the subject and is an enthusiastic reformer. His course of Lectures will be illustrated by a unique set of lantern slides, collected by himself. Dr. Bowmaker gave a single lecture last year to the Doncaster Society, and we received a report giving unqualified praise to both lecturer and lecture.

Perhaps in some cases, Branches and Educational Committees may like to combine lectures from Miss Ravenhill and Dr. Bowmaker in one course. Single lectures from Co-operators should also find a place in any programme; and in all cases where the subject is taken up, the help and interest of the Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors should be enlisted. An interesting course might be made up of 4 lectures from Miss Ravenhill, Dr. Bowmaker, a Co-operator, and a Medical Officer of Health (on the

local town conditions). Any way,—plenty of lecturers are to be found in our list, and can be used as desired. All we ask is that you use them largely.

We are publishing some special pamphlets on the subject—in which we have again been most kindly helped by Miss Ravenhill and Dr. Bowmaker. These are to be found on the Lecture List, and can be obtained from the General Secretary.

Practical efforts should be made after the lectures, to get any Society to form a Building Department where it does not already exist; and where it does, one of the Management Committee members should be asked to give an explanation of the Society's rules and conditions.

It need hardly be said how desirable it would be that women should be represented on Building Departments, where their practical experience as to the wants of a house would secure greater comfort and convenience. This is yet another reason why women should have seats on Management Committees.

We strongly advise that visits to municipal buildings should be arranged, and if possible, conducted by some local official. Co-operators have not only got to be model builders of houses, but also to stir on municipal enterprise, and agitate for further municipal powers.

(3) Propagandist Work.

The third object of joint work we wish to urge is that of propaganda. As yet very few Societies have recognised what excellent propagandists women make in starting new Societies, or branches of Societies. A telling speech from the chancellor of a family exchequer, showing what the divi. and the Guild had done

for her, is a sure way of winning loyal buyers for the new store: and in canvassing before a meeting, and in organising the women after it, the help of our "Guilders" would be most effective.

Guild Examinations.

We must now pass on to other forms of work. The success of our first Guild and Co-operative Examination (when 32 papers were sent in) has encouraged us to propose that two examinations should be held this year—an Elementary, for all those who are young in the faith; and an Advanced, for elder believers. There was a feeling expressed at Derby, that our regulations should be more stringent, as regards superintendence and hours. But we are very anxious not to tighten things up in a way that might deter any of our members from competing. It is a formidable task under any circumstances, for older women who have not had modern advantages, to sit down and write answers. Our object in this examination is to help and encourage every member. What we want is not so much to discover those who have most knowledge, but to insure that all have some knowledge.

Those of our members, who have time and ability to be more regular students of Co-operation, we strongly urge to join the Co-operative Classes mentioned on page 2, under the auspices of the Co-operative Union when the examination is of a stricter kind.

Mrs. Abbott has most kindly undertaken to set the questions for our own Examination, and to look over the answers. The Questions will be sent out in November, and the Answers are to be returned in April. The winner of the highest marks in each Examination will have their expenses paid to our next Annual Meeting at Plymouth.

Sectional Work.

It is very pleasant, owing to our increased grant of £200 from the Co-operative Union, to be able to be more generous in the sums allotted for Speaking Expenses, &c., to our Sectional Secretaries. Particulars of these grants will be given in the "Woman's Corner."

The subject (besides the Winter Circular) for our Autumn Conferences will be "Credit and High Prices." The papers will be written by different Sectional Members.

The dates are not yet assigned, but the Conferences will be held at the following places:—

MIDLAND CONFERENCE at Burton-on-Trent.
NORTH-WESTERN CONFERENCE at Nelson.
NORTHERN ,, ,, Jarrow.
SOUTHERN ,, ,, London.
WESTERN ,, ,, Gloucester.

Delegates are urged to attend in large numbers.

District Work.

Another use to which we shall be specially glad to put our larger income, will be in helping our poorest districts, whose work has been sadly hampered for want of funds. The ways in which we propose to do this will be stated in the "Corner."

We are also considering changes in our Model District Rules. These will be forwarded to District Secretaries, with a suggestion that a District Conference should be held to consider them.

As usual, we recommend that Districts should provide their own papers for their Conferences, so as to train and bring out their members, but where this is impossible, papers for discussion can be obtained from the General Secretary. Miss Mayo's paper on "House-Building" and Mrs. Slack's on "Co-operative Productions" could be used with advantage.

Our Lecture List.

We hope our plan this year of dividing the lectures into subjects, will recommend itself to Branches. Every programme should contain some of the *Co-operative and Industrial Lectures.*

We have given a special heading this year to *The Accidents Compensation Act,* and to *Dangerous Trades,* on account of their immediate practical importance. The Accidents Act is a new law, only coming into force last month, of the very utmost importance to workers. We have therefore made a point of obtaining lectures upon it—and hope especially that all Branches in districts where women are employed will make a study of the Act.

The newspapers have recently been full of the terrible evils that may result from working in the Potteries and in Match Factories. A great effort is now being made to prohibit legally the use of raw lead and yellow phosphorus. We have already sent our views to the Home Secretary, and we must help on the agitation in every way we can. Lectures on these subjects will be found under the head of *Dangerous Trades.*

An interesting lecture—bearing on our duties as employers,—to which we should like to call attention is that by Miss Bondfield, on the *Lives of Shop Assistants.* Miss Bondfield was

herself an assistant and is well acquainted with the conditions under which shop-girls live.

Miss Ravenhill's many friends will be glad to see she is prepared to follow up last year's lectures with a course of 4 lectures on *Some Public Health Problems.* Besides this, Branches which were unfortunately unable to secure Miss Ravenhill last year, may arrange for her first set of lectures on the Public Health Laws, which is entitled "*England's Sanitary Safeguards.*"

A Foreign Trip.

Here is a new departure we are anxious to take. We propose to make arrangements for a party to visit the famous Familistère (Workmen's Palace, Schools, Garden, Theatre, etc.,) of M. Godin at Guise, in the North of France. Perhaps we ought to limit the party to those who attend classes in French, the subject Mrs. Deans urged us to take up at Derby. Any way we shall be glad to hear the views of our members, especially as regards *the time of year* that would suit them best. Those who want to know about the Familistère should read Mr. Greening's "Co-operative Traveller Abroad", which can be obtained from the Co-operative Union, price 1/- Particulars as regards cost, etc., will be published later in the "Corner."

To New Branches.

In the early stages of Guild work, we must lead our members on gently. It may often be advisable to draw the members together by a course of Cookery or Sick Nursing lessons, which

will give practical results at once, and so prove the value of the Guild. And one in four meetings might well be set aside for "Socials," when the members could mix freely together, and outsiders should be brought in, and a short and simple talk on the Guild or the Store could be given. A simple form of occupation is what is called Questions and Answers, when members write questions and each draws one, and does her best to answer it. A list of our Popular Papers (on loan) will be found at the end of the Annual Report. These are useful for reading aloud, and for training members in discussing.

In conclusion, we continue to urge every member to buy the *Co-operative News*, and read and contribute to the "Woman's Corner."

Wishing you all success in your work, and hoping you will let us help you in every way we can,

Yours truly,

E. Carr, (President).
M. A. Deans (Vice-President).
A. Ashworth (Treasurer).
M. J. Bury.
E. Widlake.
M. A. Dring.
M. Llewelyn Davies (General Secretary.)

END OF
TITLE